True and False Monkey

Monkey Series 17

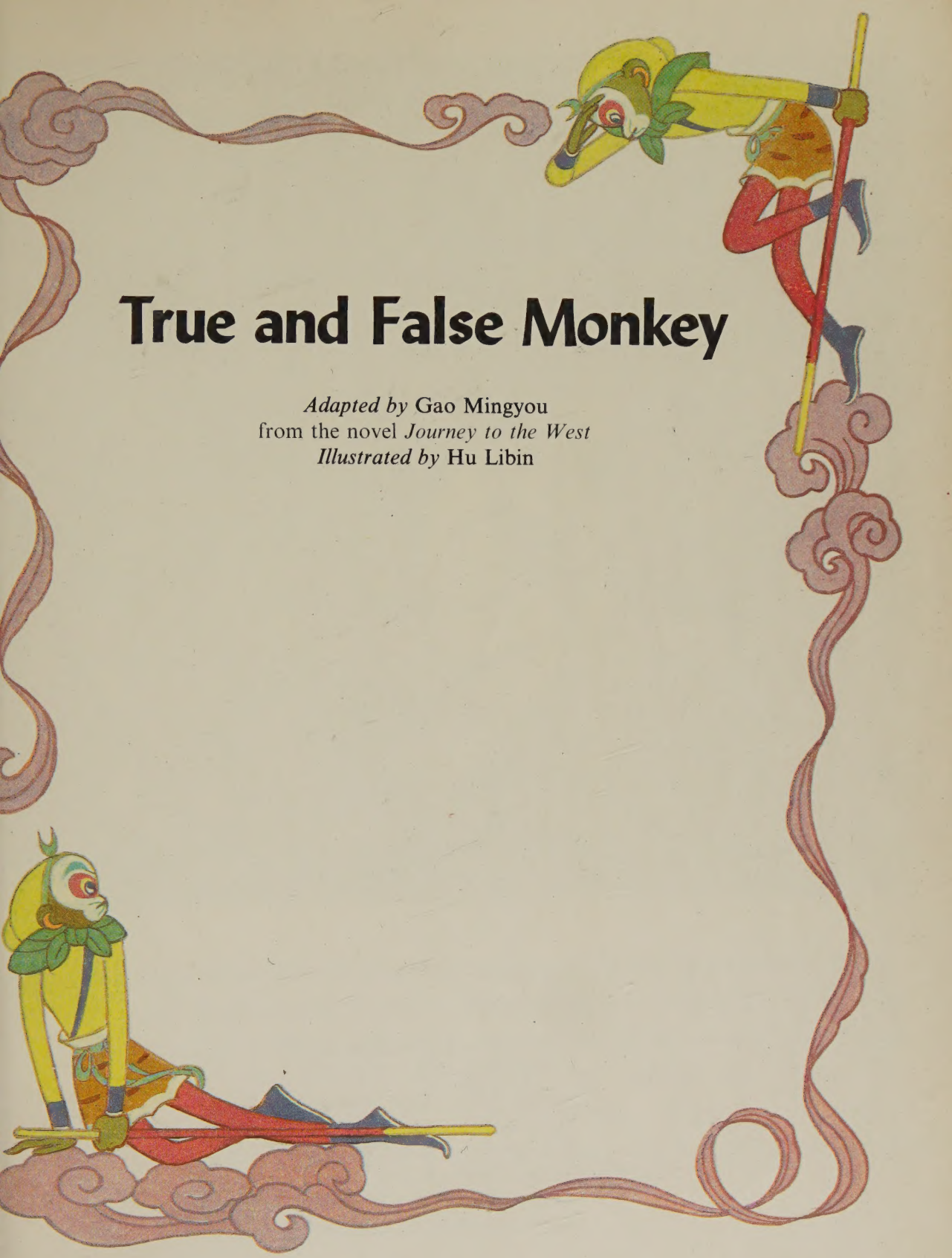
True and False Monkey

This is the seventeenth in a series of thirty-four picture books telling the story of Monkey, adapted from the ancient Chinese fantasy novel *Journey to the West*.In the previous book the Tang Priest and his disciples arrived in the Womanland of Western Liang. The queen of the country wanted to marry the Tang Priest. With his magic Monkey helped his master get away, but he was soon seized by the scorpion spirit. The star-officer killed the vicious spirit and the three disciples rescued their master.

True and False Monkey, with seventy-three colour illustrations, tells this story: After a fight with bandits who tried to rob the Tang Priest, Monkey discovers another Monkey who looks just like him. When the two meet, they fight endlessly as they go to the Bodhisattva Guanyin, the Jade Emperor, the Tang Priest and the Lords of the Underworld to be told apart, but no one can tell the true Monkey from the false one. Finally the two Monkeys go to Sakyamuni Buddha, who shows everyone the false Monkey is really a six-eared macaque.

The next book in the series:

The next volume is *Borrowing the Plantain Fan*.In order to escort his master the Tang Priest across the Fiery Mountains, which are blocking their way to the West, Monkey goes to Raksasi to borrow her plantain fan to blow out the flames, but Raksasi hates Monkey for having once subdued her son, Red Boy, and she wants revenge. With her husband, the Bull Demon King, she fights Monkey, while Monkey tries to get the fan from her. After many tests of wit and bravery, and with the help of the local gods, Monkey subdues the Bull Demon King, gets the magic fan, and puts out the fires. Then master and disciples succeed in crossing the vast Fiery Mountains.



True and False Monkey

Adapted by Gao Mingyou
from the novel *Journey to the West*
Illustrated by Hu Libin

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The last instalment told how Monkey rescued the Tang Priest from the Pipa Cave, and master and disciples continued on their journey to the West. One day a high mountain rose up in front of them and the Tang Priest called out, "Be careful, Monkey, I'm afraid there may be demons on that steep mountain." "Don't worry, Master," Monkey said. "You needn't be scared of demons while I'm here." The Tang Priest was happy to hear this.

When the four of them went down the western slopes of the mountain and came on a stretch of level ground, it was getting late. Monkey shouted to the horse to go faster. The horse shot ahead like an arrow and didn't slow down until it had covered six or seven miles.

As the Tang Priest was riding along he heard a gong being struck, and over thirty bandits emerged from both sides of the road to block his way. "Don't go any farther, monk," the two burly fellows heading the gang shouted. "Give us your money, or we'll kill you!" Much frightened, the Tang Priest fell off his horse, pleading loudly, "Spare my life, Your Majesties! Spare my life, Your Majesties!"

Just at this moment Monkey arrived. He swung his cudgel and struck and killed the two bandit chiefs, sending the others fleeing for their lives. The venerable monk could not stand such a bloody scene. He told Pig to bury the dead, then he scattered earth on the grave, burned incense and began to pray. After this he scolded Monkey for having killed the living.

The four set out again for the West. When they came to a farmhouse, the Tang Priest knocked at the gate. An old man came out. The Tang Priest, greeting him, said, "This humble monk has been sent by the Great Tang in the East to fetch the scriptures from the Western Heaven. As it's getting dark, I've come to beg a night's lodging from you."

The old man invited the four into the thatched cottage and told his wife to fetch cups of tea and prepare food. After supper the old man led them to the back room, where they could spend the night.

The old man's son happened to be one of the bandits whose chiefs had been slain by Monkey. Late that night, when he led a group of the robbers back to his home, he was told that the Tang Priest and his disciples were sleeping there. "What luck!" he shouted, ready to avenge his chiefs by murdering the four.

The old man, terrified, hurried stealthily to the back room and opened the back gate to let the Tang Priest and his disciples escape. They had fled just a short distance when they saw the bandits were after them, cursing and waving their weapons. Monkey swung his cudgel and turned to face them. "Monkey," the Tang Priest warned hurriedly, " you are not to hurt them. Just scare them off."

However, Monkey killed all the bandits, including the old man's son. The sight frightened the Tang Priest so much that he rolled off his horse.

The Tang Priest said angrily to Monkey, "Yesterday after you killed the two bandit chiefs, I scolded you for your cruelty, and today you've murdered several more! Don't forget that last night the old gentleman gave us a meal and a night's lodging and opened the back gate to let us escape. Even if his son was a bandit, you shouldn't have killed him. You're too much of a murderer to fetch scriptures. Go at once!" Terrified, Monkey fell on his knees.

Monkey said, "I've got places to go, Master, but I'm afraid you will never reach the Western Heaven without me." Without replying, the Tang Priest began to recite the Band-tightening Spell. Monkey's head was squeezed so tight that his face and ears turned bright red, his eyes bulged and his brain ached.

In unbearable pain and seeing that the master would not change his mind, Monkey had no choice but to go. He shot into the air on his somersault cloud, thinking: "The master has let me down. I'm off to the Southern Sea to make a complaint before the Bodhisattva Guanyin."

On seeing the Bodhisattva, Monkey kowtowed and told her all the details of how the Tang Priest had sent him away because he had killed the bandits. He went on to beg the Bodhisattva to take the Band-tightening Spell off his head and let him go back to live in the Water Curtain Cave. But the Bodhisattva said, "You'd better stay here, for your master will soon come to look for you; he is just about to be wounded."

The Tang Priest was hungry and thirsty after driving Monkey away. He sent Pig to beg for some food and fetch some water, but after a long time there was still no sign of Pig. Tying the horse to a tree, Friar Sand said, "Master, take a good rest. I'm going to fetch some water for you."

While the Tang Priest was enduring his burning thirst, a noise made him open his eyes and look. It was Monkey kneeling before him, holding a pottery cup. "Master," he said, "without me you can't even have water to drink. Please drink this lovely cold water while I go to beg some food for you." "I'd rather die of thirst than drink water you give me. Go away, you wicked ape!"

At that, Monkey turned angry and, shouting "You cruel old baldy!" swung his cudgel, knocking the Tang Priest senseless. Then he picked up their baggage and disappeared on a cloud.

Pig had begged a bowl of leftover rice and was on his way back when he met Friar Sand looking for him. Pig had Friar Sand carry the rice in the fold of his habit so he could fetch water in the bowl, then they cheerfully went back.

But what did they find but the Tang Priest lying unconscious on the ground, no trace of the baggage, and the white horse running to and fro, whinnying. Pig howled in horror, "This must have been done by the survivors of the gang Monkey drove away; they came back, killed Master and took away the baggage. Wait till I sell the horse for a few ounces of silver to buy a coffin to bury Master in, then we can split up and go our separate ways." But Friar Sand would not hear of this. He propped the master up and moaned, "Poor, poor Master!"

The Tang Priest gradually came to. He told the two disciples how Monkey had tried to kill him and stolen the baggage. Pig was furious. "I'm going to find that monkey and get back our bundles." Friar Sand said, "Let's first help Master get to some cottage in the hollow and ask for hot tea to make him better, then we can go to find Monkey."

The three of them begged for some hot tea to drink. When the Tang Priest grew calm again, he said to Pig, "You have never got on with that monkey. Let Friar Sand fetch the baggage." Then he turned to Friar Sand. "If that ape won't give you the bundles, you mustn't quarrel with him. Just go to the Bodhisattva and ask her to demand them from him." Friar Sand nodded and took off on a lightning cloud.

On reaching the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit, Friar Sand landed his cloud and found his way to the Water Curtain Cave. As he approached, he saw the mountain was covered with yelling monkey spirits.

Closer still, he saw Monkey sitting on a stone terrace, holding in both hands the passport given to the Tang Priest by the Emperor of the Great Tang and reading it aloud.

Friar Sand could not help calling out, "Elder Brother, how come you're reading Master's passport out loud?" Monkey shouted back, "Who are you? What a nerve you have coming so near our immortals' cave!" Seeing that Monkey refused to recognize him, Friar Sand went up to him with a bow and said, "If you still remember what you owe our master for delivering you from your torment in the past, bring the baggage and go back with me to see him; if not, please give me the bundles."

Monkey laughed and replied, "The reason I hit the Tang Priest and took the baggage is that I've made up my mind not to follow him anymore to the West; instead I'll go to the Western Heaven to worship the Buddha and fetch the scriptures myself. After taking them back to the East, I'll make people there worship me as a great sage and I'll be famous forever." "What you say isn't right," retorted Friar Sand. "No Lord Buddha is going to give you the scriptures if you turn up without the Tang Priest."

"Brother," said Monkey, "I've chosen another holy monk to escort. Tomorrow we're setting out on our journey." No sooner had he finished than some little monkeys came out leading a white horse, a Tang Priest, a Pig and a Friar Sand carrying the baggage on his monastic staff.

At this Friar Sand in a fury raised his demon-quelling staff with both arms and brought it down on his double's head, killing him outright. It turned out to be a small monkey spirit.

Monkey was so angry that he had all the monkeys surround Friar Sand. Lashing about, Friar Sand fought his way out and escaped by cloud, heading for the Southern Sea to find the Bodhisattva Guanyin.

After reaching Mount Potaraka in the Southern Sea, Friar Sand knelt down before the Bodhisattva. Just as he was about to make his complaint, he spotted Monkey standing beside her. Furious, he struck at Monkey's face with his staff, cursing, "You thoroughly evil, treacherous ape! Now you are trying to deceive the Bodhisattva too."

Instead of hitting back, Monkey dodged the blow. "Don't hit him, Friar Sand," said the Bodhisattva. "Tell me what's happened." Friar Sand gave her all the details. After listening to him, the Bodhisattva laughed and said, "Monkey has been here four days. How could he be in the Water Curtain Cave?"

"But I'm telling you the truth," Friar Sand replied. "Calm down," said the Bodhisattva. "I'll send Monkey back to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit with you to take a good look round. You can then tell the true from the false." At this Monkey and Friar Sand went straight back to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit by two beams of auspicious light.

oon the two were in sight of the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit. They rought down their clouds and took a good look. There was indeed a Monkey sitting on a high stone terrace, drinking and making merry vith the other monkeys.

After returning from the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit, Friar Sand told the Tang Priest what had happened. The Tang Priest was very surprised and regretful. "When I said that Monkey had hit me and taken the baggage, I didn't realize that it was an evil spirit that had turned itself into another Monkey." Pig meanwhile roared with laughter.

Friar Sand stood beside them, swinging his staff and longing to join in, but since he could not tell the true from the false, he was afraid of wounding the real Monkey. So he shot back down to the cliff, where he fought his way into the Water Curtain Cave to look for the passport and the bundles, but he failed to find them.

He took his cloud back up and swung his staff again, but he was still unable to strike. "Friar Sand," said Monkey, "go back and tell the master what's been happening here while I drive this demon to the Southern Sea so the Bodhisattva can identify me as the real Monkey." The other Monkey repeated what he said.

As the two Monkeys looked and sounded exactly alike, Friar Sand really could not tell them apart, so he turned his cloud to rejoin the Tang Priest.

The two Monkeys fought and shouted their way to the Southern Sea. Their constant shouting disturbed all the divine beings who protected the law, so they hurried to report it to the Bodhisattva Guanyin.

The Bodhisattva shouted, "Stay where you are, evil beast!" At that each Monkey grabbed hold of the other while the real one said, "I'm the real Monkey." The other Monkey retorted, "He's the fake one."

The Bodhisattva then quietly recited the Band-tightening Spell. Both Monkeys cried out in pain, clutched their heads and rolled on the ground, shouting, "Stop, stop!" But the moment she stopped, they grabbed each other again and resumed fighting and shouting.

At her wits' end the Bodhisattva said, "Monkey, you were once appointed Protector of the Horses. When you made havoc in the Heavenly Palace, all the heavenly generals recognized you, so you'd better go to the Heavenly Palace and let them tell you apart." Pulling and tugging at each other, they went straight to the Heavenly Palace

The two Monkeys fought their way to the Southern Gate of Heaven, where all the gate gods, big and small, blocked the entrance with their weapons and shouted, "Where are you going? This is no place for a brawl." The two told exactly the same story, and no matter how closely the gods looked, they could not tell them apart.

"If you can't tell which is which," the two shouted, "get out of the way and let us go to see the Jade Emperor!" As the gods could not stop them, they let the fighting Monkeys into the Hall of Miraculous Mist.

On seeing the two rush in, the Jade Emperor got so alarmed that he could not speak for a while. The two Monkeys told the same story all over again and asked the Jade Emperor to tell them apart.

The Jade Emperor ordered Heavenly King Li the Pagoda Carrier to look at them both in his demon-revealing mirror. The Heavenly King took out his mirror and looked at their reflections; they both looked exactly the same, dressed exactly alike.

So even the Jade Emperor and Heavenly King Li could not tell the true from the false. The two Monkeys then said, "Let's go see Master." Fighting each other on the way out of the Southern Gate of Heaven, the two landed on the road leading westward.

In a burst of rage the real Monkey went up to the false one to strike him with his cudgel. Without a word the fake Monkey went at him with his own iron cudgel. When the two Monkeys were fighting together, there was no way of telling them apart.

As they were talking, they heard a noisy quarrel in midair. The Tang Priest looked up and saw two Monkeys fighting. Itching for a fight, Pig said, "I'm going up to have a look."

Vith that Pig leapt up into the air and shouted, "Stop yelling, Brother;
ig's here!" "Hit the evil spirit!" both Monkeys said at the same time.
Hit the evil spirit!"

Friar Sand said, "Master, Pig and I will each bring one of them back here, and then you just say the spell. The one who suffers will be the real Monkey." "A good idea," said the Tang Priest.

"Stop fighting!" Friar Sand called. "Go to Master and let him tell you
apart." Friar Sand and Pig, each dragging one of the Monkeys, landed
their clouds in front of the Tang Priest.

Silently the Tang Priest recited the Band-tightening Spell. "Stop! Stop!" Both Monkeys were suffering. "Why do you have to say that spell when we're fighting so hard?" Being a kind person, the Tang Priest stopped, unable to tell who was who.

The two Monkeys began fighting again. "Brothers," said one, "look after our master while I take him down to ask the Lords of the Underworld to judge." The other Monkey said the same thing. Grabbing and tugging at each other, the two soon disappeared.

Pig asked Friar Sand, "Why didn't you get the passport back when you were in the Water Curtain Cave?" Friar Sand answered, "After I took care of the little monkeys, I looked all over for the passport and bundles, but I couldn't find them."

The Tang Priest said, "Pig, you go to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit and fetch our baggage while the demon is away. We'll continue our journey to the West. Even if Monkey does come back, I won't have him." "I'm off, then," said Pig. He leapt into the air and headed off by cloud to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit.

The two Monkeys fought their way to the back of the Dark Mountain of the Underworld, where all the demons shivered with terror as they hid themselves. The first ones to run away rushed to report to Senluo Palace.

In an instant the Lords of the Underworld gathered their forces. Soon they heard the roaring of a mighty wind, and fog filled the air. The two Monkeys came tumbling and rolling into Senluo Palace.

The Lords of the Underworld stepped forward to block their way and asked, "Great Sages, why are you creating such disorder?" The two Monkeys told the same story one after the other. Upon hearing it, the Lords called on the judge to go through the registers of births and deaths.

The judge reported back that in the monkey section of the registers there was a record of how the Great Sage had raised havoc in the Underworld and removed his name from the registers. At this the Lords of the Underworld said to the Monkeys, "Great Sages, your names are not in the records and so cannot be checked. You'll have to go back to the world of the living to be told apart."

"Wait!" the Bodhisattva King Ksitigarbha shouted. "I'll ask Examiner to tell you apart." Examiner was an animal that could tell good from evil by lying on the ground and listening. It lay down on the ground as it was told to do and listened attentively.

A little later it raised its head and said to Ksitigarbha, "I've found the name of the demon, but I can't say it to his face. The evil spirit's magic powers are as strong as Monkey's, so we can't catch him in the Underworld." "Then how can we get rid of the evil spirit?" "The Buddha's power is boundless," Examiner replied.

Enlightened, Ksitigarbha said, "As you two look the same and have the same magic powers, you will have to go to Sakyamuni Buddha to be told apart." "You're right," the two Monkeys replied together.

They left Senluo Palace. Grabbing and snatching at each other, they fought and shouted their way to Thunder Monastery in the Western Heaven.

Sakyamuni Buddha could tell the two apart, but just as he was about to reveal the false Monkey, the Bodhisattva Guanyin arrived. The Buddha told Guanyin, "I can see that the false Monkey is really a six-eared macaque that knows what's happening hundreds of miles away and hears everything that's said. Because it is such an all-powerful creature it can look and sound just like Monkey."

As soon as the macaque heard the Buddha say what it really was, it started shaking with fear and took a great leap to escape, but it was immediately surrounded by the Buddha's warrior attendants.

Seeing this, the macaque's fur stood on end. It shook itself, turned into a bee, and started to fly straight up, only to fall down again as the Buddha's golden begging bowl was clapped over it.

Everyone thought it had fled, but the Buddha said, "The evil spirit is under my bowl." When the bowl was lifted, it appeared in its true form: a six-eared macaque.

Monkey swung his iron cudgel and killed the macaque with a single blow to the head. It was more than the Buddha could bear. "Terrible," he said. "This is terrible."

The Buddha then told Monkey to go back at once to escort the Tang Priest there to fetch the scriptures. Monkey kowtowed but said to him, "My master has definitely refused to have me. I beg you in your kindness to say the Band-loosening Spell so that I can take off my gold band and return to ordinary life." "Stop that silly talk," said the Buddha. "I shall ask Guanyin to take you back to your master. Of course he'll accept you."

When the Bodhisattva Guanyin heard this, she put her hands together to thank the Buddha for his mercy, then she took Monkey away from Thunder Monastery and together they went by cloud to find the Tang Priest.

They soon found the Tang Priest and Friar Sand. The Bodhisattva told them about how the Buddha had told the two Monkeys apart and how the six-eared macaque had been killed by Monkey. "Tang Priest," she said, "since there are many demon obstacles on the way ahead, you must take Monkey back and have his protection." The Tang Priest respectfully obeyed.

Just at this moment Pig returned by cloud, carrying the bundles and the passport, which he had found in the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit.

Seeing the Bodhisattva, Pig kowtowed. "Your disciple left the other day for the Water Curtain Cave on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit to look for the baggage, which I found inside the cave. I've checked it over — nothing's missing. Then I came straight back by cloud."

He asked about the two Monkeys. When he heard that the Buddha had told them apart, Pig was delighted and gave thanks over and over again.

The Tang Priest and his three disciples said farewell to the Bodhisattva, repacked their baggage and set out again for the West. They were once again of a single will and a single mind.

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The *MONKEY SERIES* of picture books is based on the ancient Chinese fantasy novel *Journey to the West*, a tale rich in episodes about demons and monsters trying to stop the Tang Priest Xuanzang from reaching Thunder Monastery in India to fetch the Buddhist scriptures. The real hero of this novel, beloved by Chinese readers for four hundred years, is the resourceful, brave and humorous Monkey.

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